

Reconsideration of this application is requested. Claims 1-4, 6-13, and 15-18 are pending and at issue.

Claims 1-4, 6-13, and 15-18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Nemoto et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,102,465) in view of Nagata et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,312,542).

Applicant traverses this rejection and requests reconsideration.

The Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to use enough thermally fusible fibers in Nemoto's fabric to achieve a tensile strength above 150. Nemoto teaches the desire for a low spring layer for suppressing transmission of vibration (col. 4, lines 66-67). The Examiner asserts that such a low spring layer would require rigidity and strength as well as increased bonding between the fibers to reduce vibration.

Nemoto states:

"[T]he sound absorbing materials can obtain desired sound absorbing characteristics such as low spring characteristics required for suppressing transmission of vibration from the panels of the vehicle body P to the upper part of the passenger compartment 2, and a high sound absorbing characteristics required for reducing noise transmitted by airborne from the vehicle body panels to the passenger compartment 2."

Therefore, the low spring layer to which the Examiner refers is actually a sound absorbing layer, i.e., the purpose of the low spring layer is to increase sound absorption. As noted in the Declaration submitted on April 9, 2003 and discussed in the October 17, 2002 Amendment (see the paragraph spanning pages 4 and 5 of the Amendment), materials having high tensile strength have low sound absorption. Hence, one of ordinary skill in the art would desire a low tensile strength (i.e., a high sound absorption) material for use in as the sound absorbing material in Nemoto.

The spring constant ( $k$ ) of a material is defined according to the formula  $k = \text{Load}/\text{Flexure}$ . The spring constant of a material is, therefore, inversely proportional to the flexibility of the material. A material having a low spring constant has high flexibility. Highly flexible materials have low tensile strength. Hence, a low spring layer such as that described in Nemoto would exhibit low tensile strength and consequently high sound absorption.

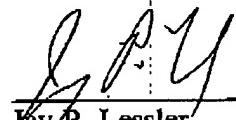
For the foregoing reasons, Nemoto does not provide any motivation for forming a fabric having high tensile strength as in the presently claimed invention. Accordingly, Nemoto alone or in combination with Nagata fails to render obvious the presently claimed invention.

Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

In view of the above remarks, it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered and that all pending claims be allowed and the case passed to issue.

If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted



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